



**State of Connecticut**  
HOUSE REPUBLICAN OFFICE  
STATE CAPITOL  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

**Testimony in Support of  
House Bills 5525 and 5527  
Judiciary Committee  
March 6, 2019**

Chairmen Stafstrom and Winfield, Ranking Members Rebimbas and Kissel, and Members of the Judiciary Committee, the House Republican Caucus would like to thank the Committee for raising **House Bill 5525: An Act Concerning Accountability for the Earned Risk Reduction Credit Program** and **House 5527: An Act Excluding Persons Convicted of Certain Serious Felonies From the Earned Risk Reduction Credit Program**. These two bills work together to ensure sentence-reducing credits are actually earned and are appropriate for the particular inmate.

**House Bill 5525** is an important House Republican proposal to ensure earned risk reduction credits are actually earned by inmates. This bill requires that inmates fully adhere to their inmate offender accountability plan and also conditions earning credits for participation in an eligible program or activity on successful completion of the program or activity, not merely enrolling. Further, this bill provides that an inmate forfeits all earned credits if he or she tests positive on a drug test while incarcerated.

The earned risk reduction credit program was created in 2011 to award eligible inmates with credits toward a reduction in their sentences. These credits were intended to incentivize inmates who participate in educational programming and are compliant with their offender accountability plan. At a minimum, inmates receiving credits should be maintaining good conduct and obedience to departmental rules. It has come to our attention, however, that inmates are currently earning credits without having to actively participate in programs or activities. Inmates are earning credits simply by being on a waiting list for programs, school, or jobs; meaning inmates are being awarded days off their sentence for doing absolutely nothing.

This program is intended to rehabilitate inmates and to prepare them for their return to society. Yet, we allow inmates to collect credits even after testing positive for drugs while in prison. This practice does both the inmates and the public an extreme disservice.

**House Bill 5527** adds certain violent offenders to those ineligible to earn risk reduction release credits, including those convicted of: manslaughter in the first degree with a firearm; assault of an elderly, blind, disabled, or pregnant person or a person with intellectual disability in the first degree; arson in the first degree; kidnapping in the first degree with a firearm; several sexual assault offenses; and employing a minor in an obscene performance. We view these crimes to be particularly heinous, and those convicted of such offenses as having earned the full severity of their court-imposed penalty.

Further, we believe violent offenders of these types would benefit from as much rehabilitation as our corrections system can offer — reintroducing them into the community at a dramatically reduced sentence benefits neither the offender nor the citizens of Connecticut.

We urge the Judiciary Committee to pass House Bills 5525 and 5527. Please allow the full General Assembly the opportunity to debate these issues and to pass legislation to improve the earned risk reduction credit program.